

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman John W. Olver (D-MA) introduced bipartisan House legislation to expand Medicaid coverage for health care services provided by nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

Principal sponsors of the bill are John Olver (D-MA), Steven C. LaTourette (R-OH) and Lois Capps (D-CT).

The Medicaid Advanced Practice Nurse and Physician Assistants Access Act would require states to cover services provided by nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

"The law should encourage people to seek medical care, not throw up roadblocks," Congressman John W. Olver said.

Currently, state Medicaid plans have the option to deny advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants from providing services to Medicaid beneficiaries.

This is a problem because nurse practitioners and physician assistants often serve medically underserved communities.

Requiring Medicaid to cover services provided by nurse practitioners and physician assistants also makes sense from a cost perspective.

"Not only does this bill provide more options for Medicaid beneficiaries, but it also could provide a savings to states by reducing the need for more expensive services," Olver said.

"Passage of this legislation would facilitate earlier and less expensive access to high quality care for a large number of people," he added.

"APRNs increase access to health care and decrease preventable acute care admissions and emergency room visits," Olver said.

The bill is endorsed by the American Nurses Association, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners and the American College of Nurse Practitioners.